

TRIP REPORT:
**INDONESIA &
TIMOR-LESTE**
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A delegation from the House Democracy Partnership (HDP) traveled to Southeast Asia from February 19 to 27, 2011, to advance partnerships with the legislatures of Indonesia and Timor-Leste. The Commission also briefly visited Kuwait to receive an update on the geopolitical landscape in the Middle East from U.S. diplomatic personnel. The delegation was led by HDP Chairman David Dreier (R-CA) and included HDP Ranking Democratic Member David Price (D-NC), HDP Members Lois Capps (D-CA) and Sam Farr (D-CA), and Representative Jim McDermott (D-WA). This was the first HDP outbound congressional delegation of the 112th Congress and the partnership's 22nd overall since its inception in 2005.

After its brief stopover in Kuwait, the delegation began its mission in Jakarta, Indonesia (February 22-23), which was selected as an HDP partner in 2005. This was the Partnership's fifth Congressional delegation to Indonesia since February 2006. The visit allowed HDP Members to work with their counterparts in the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR) on key structures necessary for an independent legislature, including the DPR's ability to hire its own staff and control its own budget. The HDP delegation emphasized the need for the DPR to strengthen and fully implement key internal reforms that were enacted in 2009.



Reps. Dreier, Price, Capps, and Farr meet with Indonesian Members of Parliament in Jakarta

In addition to meeting with the Deputy Speaker, Legislative Commission (BALEG) and House Affairs Committee (BURT) to discuss institutional reforms, HDP members also consulted with the DPR's women's caucus and the DPR committee responsible for education (Commission X). Concurrently, Congressional staff held three training sessions for Indonesian legislative staff on constituent outreach, Member/district office operations, and developing a legislative agenda.

The delegation also met with Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to discuss democratic reform, religious freedom, and general bilateral relations. Before departing Jakarta, the delegation visited U.S. sailors aboard the *USS Reuben James*, which was making a port visit to Indonesia's capital city.

The delegation then visited Indonesia's second city, Surabaya, on February 24. The visit was the first by Members of Congress to the provincial capital city of East Java, where a U.S. Consulate General is located, since the early 1990s. The delegation met with representatives from the provincial legislature to discuss national-provincial relations, as well as with the Governor of East Java to discuss Indonesia's democratic and economic progress. A meeting with the religious leaders of Surabaya's Grand Mosque was held to discuss U.S. relations with the Muslim world and Indonesia's international role as the world's largest Muslim-majority nation.

On February 25 and 26, the delegation made the Partnership's third visit to Timor-Leste since February 2006. The delegation's mission was focused on providing support to the National Parliament of Timor-Leste, punctuated by a meeting with the President of the National Parliament, where the parliament's many needs were discussed. HDP Chairman Dreier and



Reps. Dreier and Price sign MOU with Timorese National Parliament for library support project

Ranking Member Price signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on behalf of the Commission with the President of the National Parliament, initiating HDP's provision of a \$175,000 program to improve the parliament's information technology capabilities. Following the signing of the MOU, the delegation visited the library and research center, which was funded through a previous HDP grant to the parliament. HDP Members then held three breakout sessions with key Timorese committees to discuss their ongoing training and support needs, as well as parliamentary reform issues.

The HDP delegation also met with the President of Timor-Leste, José Ramos-Horta, to discuss the upcoming Timorese elections, the prospects for constitutional reform, the management of Timor's oil revenue, and the overall democratic development of the country. Following the meeting with the president, the delegation traveled outside of Dili, the capital of Timor-Leste, to Manatuto, to meet with community leaders to discuss national-local government relations, as well as visit a USAID-funded health center and water purification project. Three Timorese Members of Parliament, including the Deputy Speaker, accompanied the delegation to Manatuto.



The delegation visited a USAID-funded maternal health clinic in Manatuto, in rural Timor-Leste

Overall, the delegation advanced HDP's mission by contributing to the partnership's ongoing effort to encourage institutional reform in the Indonesian legislature and strengthen the capacity of the Timorese parliament. For more information about the House Democracy Partnership or its work in Asia, contact (202) 226-1641 or visit <http://democracy.house.gov>.